

Ex 6

October 2020

MUS 2-YEAR COMMISSION: FINAL REPORT TO THE 2021 LEGISLATURE

THE COMMISSION'S WORK

The MUS 2-Year Commission was created by [House Bill 754](#) (Vinton; 2019) and is technically called the Montana University System 2-Year Restructuring Review Commission. The restructuring refers to the incorporation in 1995 of what were historically known as “vo-tech centers” into the Montana University System (MUS) and are now known by various names as 2-year campuses. See graphic on page 4.

The commission was tasked with reviewing the reasons for the 1995 restructure and considering whether a different structure might strengthen 2-year postsecondary education in Montana and, in particular, career and technical education (CTE).

At the beginning of the 2019-2020 interim, Montana’s economy was generally thriving, and unemployment was at a near record low with the main economic concern being a shortage of skilled workers. Strengthening workforce training and better aligning industry and education were central in many policy conversations. While much in our world and economy changed in the Spring of 2020 with COVID-19 and unemployment increased dramatically, in many ways the need for a well-aligned and nimble workforce development system is more vital than ever to ensure a strong Montana, and 2-year campuses will certainly play a central role.

The commission held seven meetings over the course of the interim, and it heard from representatives of Montana’s 2-year campuses as well as from the community and tribal colleges, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, the Department of Labor and Industry, the Montana Chamber of Commerce, and multiple industry sectors. After reviewing the history of vocational education in Montana and the 1995 restructuring and hearing from 2

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